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SUBJECT: UGANDA: ROUNDUP ON MCCORMICK-POWELL VISIT

¶1. Summary: David McCormick, Deputy National Security Advisor for International Economic Affairs and Dina Powell, Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs led a delegation through Uganda from March 2-5. The delegation came to observe the impact of foreign assistance and public diplomacy efforts, with a focus on public-private partnerships, African Growth and Opportunity Act and President Bush's Emergency Plans for AIDS relief (PEPFAR) and Malaria (PMI). The delegation visited several USAID assistance programs and met with key partners including World Vision, Invisible Children, Dunavant and the UN's World Food Program. End Summary.

PEPFAR and Other Humanitarian Foreign Assistance

¶2. The delegation visited The Aids Support Organization (TASO) center in Entebbe, one of eleven satellite HIV/AIDS care and treatment centers that serve 54,000 HIV-positive patients throughout the county. In 2004, TASO was allocated initial PEPFAR funds to expand their care and counseling services to include the provision of anti-retroviral treatment (ART), using the innovative strategy of distributing ART by motorcycle to clients' homes. The delegation rode with a motorcycle convoy to a home to see this approach and learn about the products and services that are now able to reach these rural populations.

¶3. The delegation witnessed a World Food Program (WFP) food distribution and visited USAID PMI program. Koch Ongako Camp is one of 63 WFP assisted camps in Gulu district and has a population of 7,870 internally displaced persons (IDPs). Representatives from WFP stressed the difficulty for IDPs to feel safe without an official statement from President Museveni assuring them it is safe to return to their home villages. For WFP, this complicates planning for the transition between relief and development programs. However, many families have commenced agricultural production on their home land or around the camp, and return to the IDP camp only to supplement their food supplies and receive social services. The WFP currently provides 60 percent of the food consumed in the camp, and hopes to reduce that percentage as people resettle.

¶4. The village leaders of the IDP camp had the opportunity to express their anxiety over the slow peace process and their fear that assistance would diminish as the initial crisis is resolved. They requested further assistance with food, health and education, at least through the initial phase of resettlement. A/S Powell assured the village leaders that assistance will continue even after resettlement, including through additional funds for new HIV/AIDS, PMI and Tuberculosis programs. Uganda's USAID Deputy Director promised that the camp would be among many camps to receive assistance for new education and agriculture programs, but warned that these initiatives will take time to be established and become effective.

¶5. The delegation visited St. Mary Hospital Lacor, the leading hospital in northern Uganda. With funding from PEPFAR to the AIDS

Relief program, the Lacor ARV treatment program was initiated in October 2004. Currently, 1,600 patients are provided with ARVs, of which 150 are children. 7,200 HIV positive clients receive comprehensive care. From 2003 to 2006, the U.S. Government provided support to Action Against Hunger for supplementary and therapeutic feeding programs for severely mal-nourished children through USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance.

¶6. A/S Powell visited the Joint Clinical Research Center (JCRC), the premier African antiretroviral research and service delivery center, to provide an overview of USG support for using JCRC as a model for AIDS treatment in Uganda and throughout Africa. A/S Powell also met with dozens of children being served by the Meeting Point, a renowned orphanage and service provider that refers clients to JCRC for medical care.

Humanitarian Assistance

¶7. The delegation toured the World Vision Children of War Rehabilitation Center where they were briefed on reintegration and rehabilitation efforts for ex-combatants and child-mothers who had been abducted by the LRA. At one time, the center housed up to 400 children, but due to the improved security situation, only 3 young adult males were there. Since 1995, the center has supported over 10,000 children and adults affected by the LRA conflict with financial assistance provided by USAID. Two ex-combatants who escaped the LRA after hearing the GOU sponsored radio announcements, recounted their abduction, the horrors of life in the LRA, and how the center helped them reintegrate into society. A/S Powell praised the World Vision for its efforts in assisting former fighters whom had the courage to flee from the LRA.

¶8. The delegation also had the opportunity to see the dwindling number of "night commuters," children who once walked several kilometers to sleep in the safety of town each evening to avoid abduction by the LRA. At the height of the conflict in June 2004, this facility housed 10,000 children per night. Now that the security situation has improved significantly around Gulu, the facility hosts only 55-75 children the majority of who come for social services rather than safety.

¶9. The delegation met with representatives of the NGO Invisible Children at Gulu high school to witness the implementation of their Schools for Schools program, which encourages schools in the U.S. and around the world to donate money on a project-by-project basis to several schools in Gulu district. During the years of LRA conflict, the facilities at Gulu high school were looted several times and many students were abducted. The Schools for Schools program has raised enough money for Gulu high school to have a new science laboratory and a girl's dormitory. Invisible Children has raised enough money to sponsor 540 (64 percent girls) of the 1,400 students at Gulu. Sponsorship includes tuition and much needed counseling for traumatized students.

Public/Private Partnerships and Trade

¶10. The delegation flew to Kitgum district, to see a cotton gin run by Dunavant. Dunavant, based in Memphis, Tennessee is the world's largest cotton purchaser. The gin has been operating since 2002 and Dunavant signed a Global Development Alliance agreement with USAID to double the production of organic cotton in the area as well as food crops. Two thousand nine hundred farm families have self organized into "producer organizations". Once a group is able to bring together a contiguous parcel of 50 acres or more, they are eligible to participate in the project. Dunavant and USAID anticipate 12,500 resettled farm families will benefit from the initiative. Northern Uganda is a historic cotton producing area and with this new partnership, they will be able to participate in the growing global demand for organic cotton products.

¶11. David McCormick and Mike Magan visited Phenix Logistics, which made its first major shipment of apparel to the U.S. market under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) on February 23. An export of 50,000 organic t-shirts, valued at about USD 125,000

represented the first 100 percent Ugandan made organic cotton apparel.

¶12. Uganda was recently named the African lead for the next round of World Trade Organization talks. Mr. McCormick discussed Uganda's role in the talks with Minister of Energy, Daudi Migereko who is the former Minister of Trade, Tourism and Industry. Migereko praised President Bush for bringing enthusiasm to the upcoming trade talks and said he was encouraged by U.S. efforts to expand trade opportunities for Africa. Migereko added that Uganda, like most of Africa, needs to focus on trade capacity building and looks to the United States to assist in "aid for trade" options.

Public Diplomacy

¶13. During the visit, A/S Powell announced the selection of Uganda to be included in this year's State Department Youth Leadership Program. The program will bring 10 students and teachers in Uganda to the U.S. to learn about the importance of free press and free expression in the development of democracies throughout the world. This program will be among the many exchange programs between the US and Uganda, including the Fulbright Program and the International Visitor Leadership program. Following the announcement, A/S Powell participated in three media interviews with Wavah Broadcasting Service (WBS), Monitor and Uganda Radio Network.
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